

1986

Gifts to School Library Media Centers in Iowa

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Abstract

This study examines the donation and solicitation of gifts to school library media centers in Iowa. A questionnaire was used to collect data concerning numbers and types of donations, their sources, their disposal, reasons for their exclusion from collections, their perceived benefits, and whether a statement concerning gifts was included in the selection policy of the school library media center.

Numbers of donations were found to be small. Fewer than five gifts per year were received by 66.1 percent of the respondents. Gifts were usually materials donated by those closest to the daily operation of the school, particularly students, staff, and parents. Most of the gifts of materials (81.21 percent) were added to the collection.

About two-thirds of the fifty-nine respondents indicated that they had used methods of soliciting gifts. Respondents indicated that gifts supplemented the budget, stimulated interest in the program, and provided useful materials. More than half of the selection policies included a statement concerning gifts, acknowledging potential public relations problems involving gifts although no such public relations problems were mentioned by the respondents.

GIFTS TO SCHOOL LIBRARY MEDIA CENTERS IN IOWA

A Research Paper
Presented to the
Faculty of the Library Science Department

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

Sharon Stiles

July, 1986

Read and approved by
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Date July 15, 1986

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CHAPTER 1

Discussion of the Problem

Introduction

Gifts, whether of furnishings, equipment, money, or instructional materials, are means school library media specialists may use in attempting to provide a wide range of materials and services in these times when local funding, if it has not been reduced, usually has not been adequately increased. A report on expenditures for resources in school library media centers during the 1983-84 fiscal year shows that per-pupil expenditures for books in the reporting schools increased only thirty-nine cents from the 1982-83 level, an increase the authors felt was "less-than-modest," and not enough for replacing the ninety-five volumes discarded from the average collection.¹ Expenditures for all resources were only slightly higher than those reported for the previous fiscal year.² Elizabeth Futas mentions the rising prices of most materials that libraries have traditionally purchased and notes that most libraries need to be purchasing new types of materials to meet user needs. She adds, "There are fewer items being purchased for library collections at greater expense for each item. The materials

¹ Marilyn L. Miller and Barbara B. Moran, "Expenditures for Resources in School Library Media Centers FY '83-'84," School Library Journal, 31, No. 9 (1985), 21.

² Ibid.

budgets are losing the inflationary game, but in actual dollars they are not showing it."³ While gifts, along with fund-raising activities, have long been resources which private schools have relied upon, it is likely that more public school library media specialists will now perceive that there is a greater need for supplementary funding and will view gifts as a way to provide materials and services that will not otherwise be available.

Gifts sometimes provide items which otherwise are not affordable, but gifts also may be sources of materials that are not readily obtainable because they have not been in print for some time. A better copy of a well-worn favorite or a replacement for a missing copy may become available as a gift.

Free and inexpensive materials suitable for school library media centers are often advertised or are sent to schools without being requested from the government agencies, public service organizations, businesses, or private institutions which produce them. Whether solicited or unsolicited, free materials are another type of gift. Besides frequently requiring no effort to obtain, free materials often provide valuable current information.

Soliciting gifts for school library media centers helps to increase awareness of the funding needed to provide

³ Elizabeth Futas, Library Acquisition Policies and Procedures, 2d rev. ed. (Phoenix: Oryx Press, 1984), p. xxx.

materials and services. When donations are received in a positive manner, future giving may be encouraged, and good public relations surely result.

Although gifts can benefit school library media centers in the aforementioned ways, they may also have negative aspects. Gifts of print or nonprint materials are never completely free of cost since staff time, equipment, supplies, and space are required for receiving, examining, processing, cataloging, and housing them. Considering financial and time pressures, school library media specialists may not feel that non-monetary gifts are worthwhile.

Though gifts may be sources of desirable out-of-print materials, sometimes only a few gifts out of many offered to the school library media center are useful for its purposes. Many gift items are unneeded duplicates, materials in formats the collection does not include, items in poor physical condition, or materials too difficult for the age group served. Becoming a public dumping ground on the chance of obtaining a few out-of-print titles is not worthwhile.

While it is true that free materials often are good sources of current information, these materials may also be too costly in terms of staff time. It is not always possible or desirable to be placed on a mailing list. If free materials must be requested by item, the staff time required to locate and correspond with their producers may cost more than the materials are worth. Getting on a

mailing list sometimes results in receiving a flood of materials that there is not time to handle.

Lastly, public relations problems sometimes accompany gifts. Donors may seek to place conditions on acceptance of their gifts, such as wanting gift materials to be displayed but not circulated. They may not understand that some gifts do not meet the needs of the school library media center. Perhaps the most difficult to handle, individuals and organizations, sectarian and otherwise, sometimes expect that gift materials which contain their viewpoints will be included in school library media center collections and then are ready to charge censorship if they are not included. Diplomacy is needed to handle situations like these. A written policy concerning gifts is an effective tool for communicating with would-be donors.

Statement of the Problem

The gifts offered to school library media centers clearly have both positive and negative aspects which school library media specialists should consider. A review of the literature concerning gifts to all types of libraries, however, yielded limited information about gifts to school library media centers. The major aim of this study was to collect and analyze data concerning the offering of gifts to school library media centers in Iowa. This study examined eight variables concerning the offering of

gifts in order to answer the following questions:

1. How frequently are gifts offered to the school library media centers?
2. From whom do gifts come?
3. What kinds of gifts are offered?
4. What does the school library media specialist do with gifts of print and nonprint materials offered for inclusion in the collection?
5. If gifts of print and nonprint materials are not included in the collection of the school library media center, what are the reasons for excluding them?
6. According to the school library media specialist, in what ways do gifts benefit the school library media center program?
7. In what ways does the school library media specialist solicit gifts?
8. Is there a statement concerning gifts in the selection policy of the school library media center?

Related Hypotheses

To answer these questions, the following hypotheses were tested:

H₁: Seventy-five percent or more of the school library media centers received fewer than five gifts last year.

H₂: Fifty percent or more of the gifts offered to the

school library media centers were from parents of individual students and/or from parent/teacher organizations.

H₃: Seventy-five percent or more of the gifts offered to the school library media centers were print and/or nonprint materials.

H₄: Fifty percent or more of the print and nonprint materials offered to the school library media centers were excluded from the collections.

H₅: Ten percent or more of the excluded materials were inappropriate for curricular reasons and/or because of the age groups the school library media centers serve.

H₆: Fifty percent or more of the school library media specialists state that gifts are beneficial because they provide materials that otherwise would be unaffordable.

H₇: Twenty-five percent or more of the school library media specialists solicit gifts by issuing a "want list" and/or by making written requests for free materials.

H₈: Fifty percent or more of the school library media centers have a selection policy which includes a statement concerning gifts.

Assumptions

The assumptions of this study concerned the ability of the responding school library media specialists to accurately recall the instances when gifts were offered to their school library media centers during the 1984-85 school year. It is probable that records of gifts often either are not kept or, in the case of materials added to the

collection, are not maintained separately from records of purchased materials. A major assumption was that in the absence of written records the respondents would be able to accurately remember details about the instances when gifts were offered. Another assumption was that the respondents would remember all the gifts offered rather than remembering those they perceived to be extremely worthwhile or completely worthless while forgetting others. A third assumption was that the respondents would record information only for gifts offered during the 1984-85 school year, not confusing them with gifts that were offered during previous years.

Limitations

This study purposed to gather data on the gifts offered to school library media centers in Iowa during a single school year. No attempt was made to gather data for prior years or to predict the future incidence of offerings of gifts. This study was also limited due to the population chosen to receive the questionnaires. The school library media specialists receiving the questionnaires were not asked to estimate the value of the gifts their school library media centers received. They were not asked how much the gifts of materials which were added to the collections have been used. This study did not seek to examine possible relationships between the offerings of gifts and particular characteristics of school library media

centers, such as annual budget allocation, school library media center personnel, size of collection, number of students served, or grade level of the students served. Finally, all of the limitations normally attached to the use of a questionnaire as a data-gathering instrument should be considered with reference to this study.

Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this study, gifts were furnishings, equipment, print or nonprint materials, or funds, other than the regular school library media center budget or restricted federal funds, offered from any source with the understanding that no compensation would be given. Free materials of any kind, solicited or unsolicited, were defined to be gifts. When gifts were print or nonprint materials, items of a monographic nature were considered to be separate gifts. A multivolume work with a collective title was considered to be one gift, but each volume of a multivolume work was considered to be a separate gift when the volumes had individual titles and each was processed as an individual item. Materials transferred to the school library media center from another area of the school or from another school library media center were defined as gifts only if it was known that they were not originally purchased using budgeted funds of the school district. Time given by adult and student volunteers was not considered to be a gift although products made by volunteers were considered to be gifts if the school had not purchased the materials used to

make them.

For the purposes of this study, an area education agency (AEA) was defined as "an established, merged area, governed by a board of directors, and possessing boundaries which are conterminous with the boundaries of the merged areas as provided in chapter 280A of the School Laws of Iowa. The AEA Board shall be responsible for providing educational services and programs to pupils enrolled in public and nonpublic schools within its boundaries."⁴

This study used the term school library media center when referring to the centralized collection of instructional materials of any school educating students in any of the K-12 grades. For the purposes of this study, library was a more general term and was used to refer to a centralized collection of materials in any setting.

⁴ Iowa, Department of Public Instruction, School Laws of Iowa (Des Moines: State of Iowa, Department of Public Instruction, 1978), pp. 1345-46.

CHAPTER 2

Review of the Related Literature

Most references concerning gifts to libraries occurred in books on collection management or development, selection of materials, or acquisitions. Library Literature listed numerous articles concerning gifts, but these were generally about specific gifts to academic libraries or large public libraries. Only a few told of gifts to school library media centers. Recently these concerned the efforts of Apple Computer, Inc., and the International Business Machines Corporation to give computers and related materials to schools.⁵ Many of the articles listed in Library Literature included discussion about the appraisal of gifts or tax legislation concerning gifts. Only a few research studies were listed, and these also concerned gifts to special libraries and academic libraries. The books and chapters of books listed in Library Literature also mainly addressed gifts to special, academic, and public libraries when the type of library under discussion was mentioned at

⁵ "Apple to Donate Micros to 9000 Calif. Schools," School Library Journal, 30, No. 2 (1983), 73; "IBM to Donate Personal Computers," Wilson Library Bulletin, 57, No. 9 (1983), 733.

all. Usually it was not. In comparison with what had been written about gifts to other types of libraries, very little had been written about gifts to school library media centers.

Although the literature contained frequent references to specific gifts to larger libraries, there were few references to the numbers of gifts which libraries receive annually. William A. Katz, citing figures from a 1970's study of large research libraries, stated that 61% of the responding librarians received between 3000 and 26,000 gift items annually.⁶ Rose Mary Magrill and Doralyn J. Hickey reported in Acquisitions Management and Collection Development in Libraries that academic and research libraries receive endowments and large, valuable gift collections while other sizes and types of libraries are likely to receive "small gift collections or single-item donations."⁷ Alfred H. Lane maintained that "a direct correlation [exists] between the size and importance of a library and the number of gift items it attracts."⁸

⁶ William A. Katz, The Selection of Materials for Libraries (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1980), p. 81, citing Gifts and Exchange Functions in ARL Libraries (Washington, D.C.: Association of Research Libraries, 1976).

⁷ Rose Mary Magrill and Doralyn J. Hickey, Acquisitions Management and Collection Development in Libraries (Chicago: American Library Association, 1984), p. 178.

⁸ Alfred H. Lane, Gifts and Exchange Manual (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1980), p. 28.

From a survey on the collection development of state agency libraries in Austin, Texas, Mary C. Grattan noted that over 28% of the items making up the collections were gifts.⁹ Since the median number of items acquired during fiscal year 1975 was 201 (excluding current periodical titles),¹⁰ the median number of gift items added yearly would be 56. These libraries had a median collection size (excluding periodicals) of 2200 items,¹¹ making their collections much smaller than the collections of most school library media centers in Iowa. Because of the great importance of these specialized state agencies for their users, evidenced by their users having donated about 12.8% of the total items in the collections,¹² the number of gifts to these libraries should have been large compared to collection size. G. Edward Evans said, "Even the smallest library will receive a few gift items during the year,"¹³ and it is reasonable to expect that school library media centers in Iowa should fit this category of receiving only a few gifts per year though no statistics on the numbers of gifts offered to school library media centers were available in the literature.

⁹ Mary C. Grattan, "Collection Development in Texas State Agency Libraries," Special Libraries, 68, No. 2 (1977), 71.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ G. Edward Evans, Developing Library Collections (Littleton, Colo.: Libraries Unlimited, 1979), p. 205.

The literature suggested that teachers and parent/teacher organizations are the two major sources of gifts to school library media centers. Kay E. Vandergrift, discussing the factors determining the selection practices of school library media specialists, mentioned these sources and other sources of support to school library media centers.¹⁴ Her information came from a 1977 survey which was a nation-wide sampling of school library media center personnel conducted by the American Association of School Librarians, the Resources and Technical Services Division of the American Library Association, and the Association of American Publishers. Vandergrift noted that,

[a] greater percentage of respondents indicated their support to be from local government, teacher contribution, and parent/teacher (PTO) organization than from either the federal or state government. . . [with] 3% [having] indicated they obtained 100% of their funding from the PTO and 20% [having] indicated they obtained 100% from teacher contributions.¹⁵

It is probable that the support the respondents received from their local governments was in the form of budgeted funds. The teacher contributions and parent/teacher organization contributions probably represented gifts. The school library media specialists who reported

¹⁴ Kay E. Vandergrift, "Selection: Reexamination and Reassessment," School Media Quarterly, 6, No. 2 (1978), 106.

¹⁵ Ibid.

receiving 100% of their support from teacher contributions may have been reporting transfers of materials from classroom collections to newly established school library media centers. The contributions from parent/teacher organizations in all likelihood were funds made available to provide specific materials, equipment, or furnishings.

The literature recorded many other sources of gifts. Among these were patrons, alumni, the community at large, other libraries, businesses, government agencies, and other non-profit organizations. Vandergrift's identification of teachers and parent/teacher organizations as major sources of support to school library media centers indicates that teachers and parent/teacher organizations probably are also their most frequent sources of gifts.

Only three of the frequent references in the literature concerning the kinds of gifts offered to libraries were helpful to this study. In Building Library Collections, Wallace John Bonk and Rose Mary Magrill noted that gifts to libraries are usually in the form of books, journals, or money.¹⁶ Background Readings in Building Library Collections addressed the need for libraries to have a

¹⁶ Wallace John Bonk and Rose Mary Magrill, Building Library Collections, 5th rev. ed. (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1979), p. 294.

"general policy on gift books and magazine subscriptions,"¹⁷ which suggests that these may be either the more common or the more troublesome types of gifts of materials. Richard K. Gardner stated, "Gifts may be in the form of money or more often of materials."¹⁸ None of these references specifically addressed the types of gifts offered to school library media centers. It is logical to suppose that school library media centers receive more gifts of print materials than other types of gifts since print materials appear to be the most common gifts to libraries in general. It is reasonable to expect that money is frequently given for the purpose of purchasing designated materials, but the literature did not address this.

The literature contained three statistical references concerning the proportion of gifts of materials which are actually added to library collections. All three concerned gifts to larger libraries. Gardner stated, "Often no more than a quarter or a third of the total gift may be suitable for addition to a collection."¹⁹ Magrill and Hickey

¹⁷ Phyllis Van Orden and Edith B. Phillips, eds., Background Readings in Building Library Collections (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1979), p. 89.

¹⁸ Richard K. Gardner, Library Collections: Their Origin, Selection, and Development (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1981), p. 206.

¹⁹ Ibid.

referred to a 1976 survey of fifty-one members of the Association of Research Libraries which indicated that 33% of the libraries processed 25% or less of the gifts they received, and only 7% processed as much as 75%.²⁰ Alfred H. Lane reported that "[o]ne large library estimated that it could use only 40 percent of the materials it received as gifts."²¹ No similar statistics or estimates were available concerning the proportion of gifts of materials which are actually added to school library media center collections.

The related literature yielded no statistics concerning what is done with gifts of materials which are not included in library collections. Lillian N. Gerhardt noted that libraries should evaluate gifts of materials "for selection, return, or rejection."²² Few writers mentioned returning the gift to the donor as a means of disposal. Lane's list of ways to dispose of gifts excluded from the collection was the most complete. He mentioned selling them, exchanging them for other materials, discarding them, giving them away, or storing them on the chance that they might be of use in the future.²³ He and several others advocated advising

²⁰ Magrill and Hickey, p. 178.

²¹ Alfred H. Lane, "Gifts and Exchanges: Practicalities and Problems," Library Resources and Technical Services, 14, No. 1 (1970), 92.

²² Lillian N. Gerhardt, "On Gifts," School Library Journal, 29, No. 2 (1982), 65.

²³ Lane, "Gifts and Exchanges: Practicalities and Problems," 92.

donors of more appropriate places for gifts which clearly are unsuitable for the collections of the libraries to which they have been offered. Lane suggested giving prospective donors the names of more appropriate libraries, book drives, and charitable agencies.²⁴

The literature frequently addressed reasons for not adding gifts of materials to library collections, but it again offered no statistics. Materials which duplicate present library holdings were often mentioned. Lane's suggestion that libraries not accept gifts at all "when almost certainly 90% of the material would duplicate present holdings" implies that this has been a serious problem for large libraries.²⁵ Materials which are outdated or in poor physical condition were also frequently mentioned, as well as materials in formats unacceptable to the library. In her collection of selection policies from various types of libraries, Futas included the "Materials Generally Unsuitable as Gifts" list from the selection policy of Dean Junior College of Franklin, Massachusetts.²⁶ Nearly all of the statements from the list referred to outdatedness, physical condition, or format. Items rejected ranged from titles which were simply outdated to "marked-up or

²⁴ Ibid, 95.

²⁵ Lane, Gifts and Exchange Manual, p. 30.

²⁶ Futas, pp. 449-50.

dilapidated copies," "broken and defective sets of periodicals," and "mundane gifts which might result from a spring housecleaning."²⁷ Formats rejected included "most textbooks," "most paperbacks," "most consumable materials," "most ephemera," "materials on hobbies and crafts," and "foreign language titles, except in those languages taught at the College."²⁸ Magrill and Hickey reported that a great percentage of the gifts presented to larger libraries were rejected for reasons of duplication or physical condition or for being inappropriate for the collection.²⁹

Besides these major reasons for excluding gifts from library collections, the literature frequently included discussions of the cost of adding gifts. One very complete listing of the possible costs which should be considered mentioned the need to balance the worth of each gift against the costs of processing and housing it, the availability of staff to handle its cataloging and processing, the availability of space to handle and house the gift, the difficulty of maintenance or of keeping the gift up-to-date, and any special handling the gift would require which might make it an impractical addition to the collection.³⁰ Bonk

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Magrill and Hickey, p. 178.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 179.

and Magrill discussed situations when donors wanted to place restrictions on the use of materials, such as not marking bindings, keeping a collection of gift books together for display only and in its own quarters, or never removing the gift from the library or discarding it from the collection.³¹ According to Bonk and Magrill, serious problems often have arisen when gifts of religious periodicals have been offered by donors insisting that their gifts be displayed on open racks and then regularly returning to be sure of the public visibility of their donations.³²

Van Orden's list of "criteria that assess the item itself and its relation to the collection development policy" suggested some additional reasons for excluding gifts of materials from school library media center collections.³³ She noted that,

generally accepted criteria [are]
literary quality, currency, accuracy of
information, appeal and value to
children, application within the
curriculum, and quality and format of
presentation.³⁴

³¹ Bonk and Magrill, p. 295.

³² Ibid., p. 79.

³³ Phyllis J. Van Orden, The Collection Program in Elementary and Middle Schools (Littleton, Colo.: Libraries Unlimited, 1982), p. 41.

³⁴ Ibid.

Of Van Orden's list, "appeal and value to children" and "application within the curriculum" are criteria which have greater importance for school library media centers than for other types of libraries.

The literature mentioned several benefits of gifts to libraries. Besides representing "a traditional but greatly underutilized source of supplementary funding,"³⁵ gifts may also fill the need for certain materials so that purchase is unnecessary. This is particularly important when beginning a new program requires "start-up funds" for providing equipment and materials.³⁶ Gifts of materials may be useful, but unusual or expensive, so that the library could not normally afford to buy them. Collection Development in Libraries stated that libraries receiving many out-of-print books would find "choice titles or rare editions" among them.³⁷ These could provide materials that are impossible to buy, at times replacing missing or worn copies of titles the library has purchased in the past.

³⁵ Robert D. Stueart and George B. Miller, Jr., eds., Collection Development in Libraries: A Treatise, Vol. X of Foundations in Library and Information Science (Greenwich, Conn.: JAI Press, 1980), Part B, p. 552.

³⁶ American Library Association, Resources and Technical Services Division, Collection Development Committee, Guidelines for Collection Development, ed. David L. Perkins (Chicago: American Library Association, 1979), p. 37.

³⁷ Stueart and Miller, Part A, p. 276.

Magrill and Hickey thoroughly discussed the variety of free materials available from various sources.³⁸ The authors pointed out the value of free materials both as current information and as otherwise unavailable information, especially in the case of serials published in foreign countries.³⁹ Rose C. Wolf noted that gifts are an indication that "the community has accepted the library as a viable institution [which is] important to the citizens of the community."⁴⁰ She suggested that the positive reception of gifts at the public library where she had been serving, along with the otherwise positive involvement of the library in the lives of local residents, had been good for public relations and had also stimulated an increase in donations throughout a four-year period.⁴¹ The literature did not mention particular benefits of gifts to school library media centers, but all of the benefits to other types of libraries should also apply to school library media centers.

Some libraries will not accept unsolicited gifts. The reasoning behind such policies, even applied to some of the gifts of money offered to libraries, was clear after reading

³⁸ Magrill and Hickey, pp. 177-79.

³⁹ Ibid., pp. 165-66.

⁴⁰ Rose C. Wolf, "Library Memorials," Library Journal, 103. No. 15 (1978), 1546.

⁴¹ Ibid.

Larry N. Osbourne's observation about unsolicited gifts:

What I object to is getting five dollars to spend on a ten dollar item that costs us six dollars to handle, which we don't want in the first place, and for⁴² which I have to act improperly grateful.

Libraries not accepting unsolicited gifts often work hard at soliciting gifts. Staff members check published listings of free materials and write for those that their libraries may be able to use. Often staff members solicit specific gifts from local authors and other likely donors. They may maintain a "want list" to present to possible donors. Some libraries have regular or occasional fund drives. Others work with Friends of the Library groups to find sources of substantial gifts. School library media specialists could solicit gifts in any of these ways, staff time permitting.

One school library media specialist wrote in response to a survey, "We could not survive without our PTA. All of our micros, our software, and many of the special things we do, we would not have without them."⁴³ It is worth noting that the school library media center equivalent of Friends of the Library organizations may be parent/teacher organizations.

One reference in the literature commented upon the irony that gifts seem to be pursued less in times of

⁴² Larry N. Osbourne, "Hassling Memorials," Library Journal, 103, No. 6 (1978), 621.

⁴³ Miller and Moran, 31.

diminished funding.⁴⁴ This also occurs despite increased giving from sources in the private sector, particularly businesses. Gary Oster cited figures showing that philanthropic giving has been increasing.⁴⁵ Businesses alone have given an estimated \$2 billion annually to non-profit organizations, but only 0.2% of all corporate contributions have gone to libraries, mostly because libraries have not often applied for business donations.⁴⁶ Oster's suggestions for soliciting donations from businesses may be useful to only a few large libraries, however. It is likely that small libraries, including school library media centers, do little solicitation for gifts because staff time for this activity is either limited or unavailable. Futas noted that staff hours and salaries, services, hours the library is open, repairs, and capital improvements are usually cut before materials budgets.⁴⁷ By the time libraries are definitely feeling the need to solicit funds and gifts of other types, there may be insufficient staff to

⁴⁴ Stueart and Miller, Part B, p. 552.

⁴⁵ Gary Oster, "Local Businesses May Have Money for the Asking," American Libraries, 11, No. 6 (1980), 373, citing "Can Corporate Charity Help the Giver Too," Industry Week, 4 October 1976, p. 71.

⁴⁶ Ibid., citing Robert Bothwell, "Further Exploration of the Elusive World of Corporate Philanthropy," The Grantsmanship Center News, March/April 1978, p. 59.

⁴⁷ Futas, p. xxx.

handle solicitation. Concerning school library media center staffing, Miller and Moran stated,

A great deal is expected of school library media specialists. . . . More is expected than can be supplied from one person serving many teachers and students. . . . The job is impossible for one professional staff member in any but the very smallest of schools.⁴⁸

Miller and Moran also noted declining clerical assistance to school library media specialists.⁴⁹ It is unlikely that many school library media specialists have much time to devote to the active solicitation of gifts.

Since very little time is likely to be available either to actively solicit gifts or to handle unsolicited ones, it is important to have an understanding concerning how gifts will be handled in order to take as little time as possible in making decisions concerning gifts. Concerning gifts, Katz said that "the golden rule is to apply the same standards of selection that one applies to purchased materials."⁵⁰ In the literature about gifts to libraries, applying this principle to all types of gifts is advocated almost without exception, as Bonk and Magrill have noted.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Miller and Moran, 26.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Katz, p. 79.

⁵¹ Bonk and Magrill, p. 342.

They summarized principles concerning the selection of materials in their "Checklist of Statements on Selection." Along with each major statement of principle was any contradictory statement which had been made by a prominent person in the field of library science. The statement on gifts, basically the "golden rule" quoted above, had the following single contradiction: "In controversial and sectarian subjects, gifts may be accepted when purchase is undesirable."⁵² The original source of the quotation, Living with Books by Helen E. Haines, revealed her reasoning on the subject. The complete quotation read as follows: "Maintain impartiality in selection; favor no special hobbies or opinions; in controversial and sectarian subjects, gifts may be accepted when purchase may be undesirable."⁵³ Repeating the same idea later in her book, Haines added, "By such acceptance, and by general public understanding that such gifts may be made, propagandists are pacified and the library establishes a legitimate way of escape from the onus of unfair discrimination or exclusion."⁵⁴ Haines did, however, choose to exclude gift offerings expressing "extreme sectarianism, violent propaganda, and the pronouncements of obvious charlatany

⁵² Helen E. Haines, Living with Books: The Art of Book Selection, 2d rev. ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950), p. 41, cited by Bonk and Magrill, p. 342.

⁵³ Haines, p. 41.

⁵⁴ Ibid. p. 394.

and delusion."⁵⁵

This contradictory viewpoint has a contradiction within itself. Any library making exceptions to its selection policy in order to include the viewpoints of certain individuals or groups while holding that other viewpoints are unacceptable is guilty of discriminating more, not less. One of the selection policies that Futas featured in her book, the policy of the South Seattle Community College Instructional Resource Center, noted that the same criteria need to be applied to donated and purchased materials "so that the library cannot be justly accused of displaying a disproportionate amount of material from a particular viewpoint."⁵⁶

Those whose viewpoints are excluded from the collection are unlikely to be more understanding when the established selection policy is not being followed, especially those offering gifts as part of a planned propaganda campaign. In a letter published in the School Library Journal in 1982, Carolyn Noah warned that she suspected a national propaganda campaign was being conducted by a pro-life group.⁵⁷ Jane Botham, writing in response to Noah's letter, noted that her library in Wisconsin had received some of the same materials

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Futas, p. 195.

⁵⁷ Carolyn Noah, "A Warning," School Library Journal, 28, No. 10 (1982), 2.

offered to Noah's library in Massachusetts.⁵⁸ Rejection of the gifts prompted "a series of letters between a national organization and [the library's director] concerning why the books were not entered into the collection."⁵⁹ Botham concluded her letter by saying, "Having a written gift policy statement and a book selection policy in place is extremely important when a question about selection arises."⁶⁰

Such a "question" may arise from many other situations besides the apparently frequent attempts to use libraries to propagandize. Non-propagandists, too, frequently expect that their donations will automatically be included in the collection. Recognizing such expectations, Gerhardt suggested that a gift policy should begin, "While the library encourages gifts, all gifts will be evaluated for selection, return, or rejection in terms of the library's stated purposes."⁶¹ Showing this kind of statement to a prospective donor should make it clear that gifts are not automatically added to the collection. Donors sometimes seek to stipulate conditions under which the library may accept gifts. It is helpful to have a written "no strings attached policy," some type of statement which makes it

⁵⁸ Jane Botham, "On Selecting Gifts," School Library Journal, 29, No. 2 (1982), 62.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Gerhardt, 65.

clear that the library insists on controlling the conditions of acceptance of gifts. Gerhardt suggested the following statement: "Once accepted and processed, the gifts become subject to the library's regulations and procedures."⁶²

Magrill and Hickey noted that properly informing donors of how their gifts will be handled is an important part of good public relations. Their remarks on this subject were as follows:

A library should accept gifts with the understanding that they will be used to the best advantage of the library with the library exchanging, selling, or discarding unwanted materials. All donors should be informed of this so that there will be no misunderstandings. It is good practice to supply prospective donors with a printed statement that tactfully describes the conditions of gift acceptance.⁶³

Two sources frequently consulted in writing school library media center selection policies stressed the importance of having a written policy concerning gifts. American Library Association guidelines for developing selection policies stated that "the section of the selection statement dealing with collection specifications . . . will also specify policies to be used in handling such matters as gifts and special bequests."⁶⁴ The model selection

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Magrill and Hickey, p. 179.

⁶⁴ American Library Association, Office for Intellectual Freedom, Intellectual Freedom Manual, 2d rev. ed. (Chicago: American Library Association, 1983), p. 160.

policy of the Iowa Department of Public Instruction contains the following statement: "Gift materials shall be judged by the criteria in Section II [Criteria for Selection of Materials] and shall be accepted or rejected by those criteria."⁶⁵ Examination of a collection of the selection policies of school library media centers in Iowa revealed that about 45% of the 112 selection policies collected had a specific statement about gifts.⁶⁶ This was a lower percentage than might have been expected since the examination of the selection policies clearly showed that the Iowa model and the guidelines provided by the American Library Association were closely followed in formulating the vast majority of the selection policies. This may indicate that having a statement on gifts has not been of great importance to school library media centers in Iowa. Low incidence of gift offerings or having had few problems resulting from the offering of gifts could be reasons a statement on gifts was not included as often as might have been expected.

Reviewing the related literature yielded only two sources for information concerning gifts to school library media centers in Iowa. These were the collection of sample

⁶⁵ Iowa, Department of Public Instruction, Selection of Instructional Materials: A Model Policy and Rules (Des Moines: State of Iowa, Department of Public Instruction, 1980), p. 4.

⁶⁶ Mary Lou McGrew, Selection Policies Collected from Schools in Iowa Responding to 1983 Survey on Selection Policies, University of Northern Iowa, Department of Library Science, Cedar Falls, Ia.

selection policies from Iowa schools already noted and the model selection policy of the State Department of Public Instruction. Both had implications for hypothesizing the percentage of schools having a gift policy statement, one of the eight variables this study examined.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology of the Study

The major aim of this study was to collect and analyze data concerning the solicitation and donation of gifts to school library media centers in Iowa. A questionnaire was the data-gathering instrument for this study. (See Appendix A.)

The first item of the questionnaire concerned whether the responding school library media specialist held the same position during the 1984-85 school year. School library media specialists who served elsewhere during the 1984-85 school year were asked to answer only the first and last questions of the questionnaire. Those serving in the same position were asked to complete the questionnaire.

With the exception of the information sought in the first item of the questionnaire, the review of the related literature suggested the eight variables concerning the offering of gifts which became the basis for the content of the items of the questionnaire. The variables included frequency of gift offerings, sources of gifts, kinds of gifts which were offered, disposal of gift offerings, reasons for excluding gifts from the collection, benefits of

gifts, solicitation of gifts, and presence of a statement concerning gifts in the collection policy of the school library media center.

The 1984 Basic Educational Data Survey (BEDS) provided the names and addresses of the school library media specialists who were surveyed.⁶⁷ School library media specialists from four of the fifteen area education agencies in Iowa (AEA's) were selected to receive the questionnaire. The AEA's from which the school library media specialists were selected were AEA 5, AEA 7, AEA 13, and AEA 15. These AEA's are non-adjointing, and each contains at least one larger city.

From each of the four AEA's, only school library media specialists designated by the 1984 BEDS as (1) having a full-time contract, (2) having the position name "librarian," and (3) having an assignment name "audio-visual," "library service," or "library science" were considered for receiving the questionnaire.⁶⁸ These limitations were imposed in an attempt to survey only those who serve full-time as school library media specialists rather than serving in other positions.

From the four AEA's, a total of 135 school library media specialists met the limitations designated above. Of those, twenty-seven (20 percent) were selected to pre-

⁶⁷ Iowa, Department of Public Instruction, Basic Educational Data Survey (Des Moines: State of Iowa, Department of Public Instruction, 1984).

⁶⁸ Ibid.

test the questionnaire. The pre-test group was designated by selecting the name of every fifth school library media specialist who met the designated limitations. The names were considered in their order of appearance on the geographical listing of the 1984 BEDS.⁶⁹ The questionnaires for pre-testing were mailed the first week of November. Analysis of the returned questionnaires determined that no revision was needed before the questionnaire was mailed to the remaining 108 school library media specialists (80 percent) from the 1984 BEDS geographical listing who had been selected to receive the questionnaire in its final form. This group was distinct from the pre-test group.

The 1984 BEDS provided all the information concerning the assignments of the school library media specialists which was used to select the sample for this study.⁷⁰ Whether all persons identified as meeting the selection criteria really do is dependent upon the accuracy of the BEDS list.

Numbered questionnaires were sent to the 108 school library media specialists during the third week of November. A record was kept of the unique number appearing on the questionnaire sent to each school library media specialist. In case of a low return, a follow-up postcard encouraging return of the questionnaire could be sent to any of the

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

school library media specialists whose questionnaire had not been returned ten days after the mailing of the questionnaire, but this was not considered to be necessary. The number assigned to each questionnaire was removed as it was received to guarantee that all responses would remain confidential.

CHAPTER 4
Analysis of the Data

Sixty-five completed questionnaires were returned from the 135 school library media specialists selected to receive pre-test and second mailing questionnaires for a response rate of 48.15 percent. Since analysis of the pre-test questionnaires had revealed no need to revise the instrument, information from both the pre-test and second mailing questionnaires has been included in this analysis of data. (See Appendix B for tables showing the rate of response from each mailing and the distribution of response by AEA.) It was not possible to determine whether size of collection, number of students served, grade level of students served, school library media center personnel, or number of school library media centers served were factors influencing the return of the questionnaires. The timing of the mailing of the questionnaires may have been partially responsible for the low rate of response. Non-respondents were not sent follow-up postcards since their mailing would have immediately preceded Thanksgiving and the traditional beginning of the busy Christmas season.

Of the sixty-five school library media specialists who

returned completed questionnaires, fifty-nine (90.77 percent) held the same school assignment as the previous year and therefore could complete all of the items of the questionnaire. The remaining six (9.23 percent) completed only the last item of the questionnaire regarding the materials selection policy of the school library media center.

Most of the group of fifty-nine respondents who could complete all of the items of the questionnaire indicated that their school library media centers had received few gifts during the 1984-85 school year. Only four had received more than twelve gifts, one having received a total of 1,237 donations while the others received fewer than twenty. One respondent noted that eleven gifts had been received during the 1984-85 school year, adding, "On an average we receive 2 or 3 donations a year." A total of thirty-nine respondents (66.1 percent) reported receiving fewer than five gifts during the 1984-85 school year.

It was hypothesized that 75 percent or more of the school library media centers would receive fewer than five gifts per year. Although numbers of reported gifts were small, only 66.1 percent received fewer than five gifts during the 1984-85 school year, and this hypothesis was rejected. Table 1 shows complete information concerning the numbers of gifts reported.

Table 1
Number and Percent of Respondents Receiving Gifts

No. of gifts	No.	Percent
None	5	8.47
1-4	34	57.63
5-8	10	16.95
8-12	6	10.17
More than 12	4	6.78
Total	59	100.00

Sources of donations varied considerably from school to school. Respondents noted receiving gifts from sources as diverse as the Girl Scouts, a foreign exchange student, and other school library media specialists (who donated "personal materials"). Members of the community at large, students, staff, and parents were the most frequently mentioned donors. Those closest to the operation of each individual school, its students and staff, the parents of its students, and its parent/teacher organization, were the sources of 90.67 percent of all donations to the school library media centers. Individual parents donated 69.96 percent of the gifts reported. One respondent noted that donations came "from staff members and the Library Club. [The] Library Club is vital... from the standpoint of raising extra money for the library." Table 2 shows further

information about reported sources of donations.

Table 2
Number and Percent of Sources of Gifts

Source	No. reporting*	Percent reporting*	No. of gifts	Percent of gifts
Members of the community at large	22	37.29	73	4.97
Present or former students	20	33.90	224	15.26
Present or former staff members	19	32.20	66	4.50
Parents individually	18	30.51	1027	69.96
Businesses	16	27.12	18	1.23
Government agencies	13	22.03	18	1.23
Other school library media centers or other types of libraries	11	18.64	11	.75
Parent/teacher organizations	9	15.25	14	.95
Religious groups	6	10.17	8	.55
Other non-profit agencies	8	13.56	9	.61
Total			1468	100.00

* Multiple responses were possible. Percent is based on a total of 59 respondents.

It should be noted that the more frequently reported sources of donations did not necessarily account for the largest numbers of gifts. Members of the community at large were reported as sources by the highest number of respondents (37.29 percent) but donated only 4.97 percent of the reported gifts. Individual parents, on the other hand, were indicated as donors by 30.51 percent of the respondents but donated 69.96 percent of all reported gifts. Sometimes more than one source was indicated for a single gift. A school library media specialist who reported being offered only one gift, for example, checked both "present or former students" and "parents individually" as sources of that gift.

It was hypothesized that 50 percent or more of the gifts offered to school library media centers would come from parents individually or from parent/teacher organizations. Since 70.91 percent of all reported gifts were received from these two sources, this hypothesis was accepted.

Print or nonprint materials were the most frequently donated types of gifts, accounting for 97.41 percent of total donations. Fifty of the fifty-nine respondents reported receiving gifts of print or nonprint materials. "I have probably received over 400 back issues of magazines and 200 books in the 1984-85 school year," one respondent noted, adding that "gifts were often given as a quantity!" Two other respondents also mentioned receiving "old magazines," one stating that these "are often given, [and we] use them

for kids to cut up." One school library media specialist reported receiving current magazines. "One gift is the current year of National Geographic," this respondent noted. "Otherwise [we received] books, [including] a set of Time-Life art books."

In the preceding instance, the respondent had counted the current year of National Geographic as a single gift of materials. Another school library media specialist had classified magazine subscriptions as designated funds. Perhaps in the first case a notice was received that the magazine had been subscribed to as a gift to the school library media center whereas actual money was given in the second case. Whatever the reasoning involved, it was sometimes possible to assign to different categories donations that were essentially the same. Another difficulty of categorization involved Campbell's labels from soup and other products. These had been given to the schools to use as credits toward purchasing many types of items under the Campbell's Labels for Education Program. "Soup labels?" appeared in the margins of several of the returned questionnaires from the second mailing. Each school library media specialist considering the Campbell's labels problem apparently had decided not to consider the labels themselves to be donations and had converted them into the equipment, software, books, etc., which they had been used to purchase. These items were then recorded as the donations which had been made.

Donations of designated or undesignated funds were received by only fourteen school library media centers and accounted for only 1.14 percent of all gifts. The single comment about undesignated funds was concise. It read simply, "\$50 - P.T.A." Designated funds were the subject of lengthy comments by two school library media specialists. One of these respondents noted, "We received a gift of \$200 from the Class of 1918 to be used toward the purchase of an unabridged dictionary and stand. Total cost was \$350." The second respondent stated that "the Lutheran Brotherhood provided \$300 to help to replace our worn carpet. They also provided the labor to move all the books and shelves when the new carpet was installed. The school district had turned down our request for new carpet for at least ten years but suddenly was only too glad to come through when someone else was paying a fraction of the cost! (Our PTA president's husband is important in the Lutheran Brotherhood, so we got the advantage of one of their many community service projects.)" Neither respondent mentioned that any problems had occurred due to the designated funds having provided only partial payment for the item intended to be purchased.

Gifts of furnishings and equipment were not commented upon except for a lone "soup labels" notation in the margin beside "equipment." Donations of furnishings or equipment totaled only 1.46 percent of all donations and were reported by only nine respondents. Table 3 provides further information concerning the types of gifts donated to school

library media centers.

Table 3
Number and Percent of Gifts by Types

Type	No. reporting*	Percent reporting*	No. of gifts	Percent of gifts
Print or nonprint materials	50	84.75	1467	97.41
Funds designated for specific purposes	9	15.25	11	.73
Equipment	6	10.17	8	.53
Undesignated funds	5	8.47	6	.41
Furnishings	3	5.08	14	.93
Total			1506	100.01

* Multiple responses were possible. Percent is based on a total of 59 respondents.

Table 3 shows a preponderance (97.41 percent) of gifts of print and nonprint materials. It was hypothesized that 75 percent or more of the gifts offered to school library media centers would be print or nonprint materials. This hypothesis was accepted.

It should be noted that total numbers of gifts on Tables 2 and 3 differ. Respondents were asked to supply numbers when answering the corresponding items on the questionnaire; however, some respondents used check marks to

indicate their responses for all or parts of the two items. Whenever a respondent had used a check mark, the check mark was recorded under the number reporting as a single response. The number of gifts each check mark may have represented could not be determined; therefore, none of the check marks was represented by recording a number under the number of gifts. Whenever a respondent used a check mark to indicate a response for one of the two items but supplied a number for the other item, this contributed to the difference between the total numbers of gifts on Tables 2 and 3.

The respondents indicated that 81.21 percent of the print or nonprint materials offered to their school library media centers were added to the collections. About 15 percent were discarded. Much smaller percentages of the total donations of materials were stored, given away ("to classrooms," noted one respondent), or returned to the donor. None was reported to have been exchanged or sold, as is shown by Table 4 on the following page.

Table 4
Disposal of Gifts

Method of Disposal	No. reporting*	Percent reporting*	No. of gifts	Percent of gifts
Added to the collection	49	83.05	1180	81.21
Stored for possible future use	12	20.34	39	2.68
Given away	9	15.25	20	1.38
Discarded	8	13.56	211	14.52
Returned to the donor	3	5.08	3	.21
Exchanged for something else	-----	-----	-----	-----
Sold	-----	-----	-----	-----
Total			1453	100.00

* Multiple responses were possible. Percent is based on a total of 59 respondents.

Some single donations were assigned more than one method of disposal. "Some parts of gifts were discarded or given away," wrote one respondent. "We took apart the old magazines for their few good pictures, discarded the rest, but added the pictures to the picture file," explained another respondent.

In many instances, all donations were added to the collection. "Soup labels - we ordered [what] we wanted,"

stated one respondent. Another respondent, however, noted that donations were often unwanted. "Most are not accepted," was the unexplained comment. One school library media specialist accepted large numbers of gifts but was also responsible for discarding all but eleven of the 211 discarded gifts. In general, however, most of the gifts which were offered to the school library media centers were added to the collections. It was hypothesized that 50 percent or more of the print and nonprint materials offered to the school library media centers would be excluded from the collections. This hypothesis was rejected.

More school library media specialists indicated that they had excluded gifts of materials from the collection because they were inappropriate for the curriculum or age group than for any other reason. Duplication and datedness were mentioned by a slightly smaller number of respondents although datedness caused more gifts to be excluded from the collection than any other reason. Poor condition and inaccuracy, bias, or poor literary quality were indicated as reasons for exclusion by even fewer respondents. (One underlined "poor literary quality.") No other reasons were indicated more than twice. It should be noted that respondents sometimes indicated multiple reasons for not adding a particular gift to the collection. "Inaccurate because it was dated," was one comment. No respondent reported that a donation was rejected because the donor placed conditions on its acceptance, as Table 5 shows.

Table 5
Reasons for Not Adding Gifts to the Collection

Reason for exclusion	No. reporting*	Percent reporting*	No. of gifts	Percent of gifts
Inappropriate for curriculum or age group	13	22.03	41	14.75
Outdated	10	16.95	147	52.88
Duplication of present holdings	10	16.95	39	14.03
Poor physical condition	5	8.47	33	11.86
Inaccurate, biased, or of poor literary quality	5	8.47	41	1.80
Unacceptable format	2	3.39	4	1.44
Processing more costly than the gift's value	1	1.69	4	1.44
Lack of staff time for handling	1	1.69	3	1.08
Required special storage or handling	1	1.69	2	.72
Giver placed conditions on acceptance	-----	-----	-----	-----
Total			278	100.00

* Multiple responses were possible. Percent is based on a total of 59 respondents.

It was hypothesized that 10 percent or more of the excluded materials would be inappropriate for curricular reasons and/or because of the age groups the school library media centers serve. Because 14.75 percent of the excluded materials were rejected for these reasons, this hypothesis was accepted.

"Supplement the budget" was the most frequently indicated way in which respondents felt that gifts benefit school library media centers. One respondent penciled in "supplement a limited budget." "Provide useful current materials" was the second most popular response, followed closely by "stimulate interest in the program of the school library media center." Less than half as many respondents indicated that gifts provide useful out-of-print materials as indicated that gifts provide useful current materials. Seven respondents indicated "other" ways that gifts benefit school library media centers.

Several of the "other" reasons which were mentioned had to do with stimulating interest in the program of the school library media center. "The excitement of the children when they see a book they donated, or when other children use it, is worth much," wrote one respondent. Another response was similar. "[It] excites the child who gives the gift and makes him aware of the value of a book." "[I] like students to give things they think other students will enjoy," added another respondent. One comment was more general, stating that gifts benefit school library media centers by

"[providing] interaction with the community."

Other comments concerned specific types of materials. "[We] add materials (magazines) for students to use for cutting purposes," wrote one respondent. Another noted that the addition of current materials "could provide and awaken interest in a new field." Specific out-of-print materials were valued by another, "especially early school yearbooks!" "[I have] added historical materials (for reference)," wrote another respondent. Table 6 shows further information about the perceived benefits of gifts.

Table 6
Benefits of Gifts

Benefit	No. reporting*	Percent reporting*
Supplement the budget	47	79.66
Provide useful current materials	36	61.02
Stimulate interest in the program of the school library media center	35	59.32
Provide useful out-of-print materials	14	23.73
Other	7	11.86

* Multiple responses were possible. Percent is based on a total of 59 respondents.

It was hypothesized that 50 percent or more of the school library media specialists would indicate that gifts

are beneficial because they supplement the budget. Since 79.66 percent of the respondents indicated budget supplementation by gifts was beneficial, this hypothesis was accepted.

The respondents reported that they most frequently solicited gifts by writing for specific free materials. More than half as many had asked to be put on a mailing list to receive free materials. "Free magazines," and "for vertical file" were penciled notations. Concerning free materials, one respondent wrote, "I do not consider these as gifts. These were free materials requested, not gifts."

Smaller numbers of respondents had discussed the budget in relation to unmet needs or had issued a "want list." "[I asked] for birthday donations," "[I placed] articles in the school newspaper," "[I asked] for all to save labels for equipment and books and software," were comments under "other" which revealed that specific items were frequently requested even when a "want list" was not issued. The Campbell's labels program was referred to twice under "other." "Would you count the Campbell's Labels for Education Program in this area? We do participate in it," wrote one respondent.

Eighteen respondents did not indicate any ways in which they solicited gifts. Three checked "other" but wrote comments such as "none of the above." Several respondents indicated that they did not feel that they solicited gifts. "I don't solicit!" wrote one. "Most [gifts] have been

unsolicited," noted another. "They came to me, wrote me, or contacted the school district," was another comment. One school library media specialist did not indicate soliciting gifts during the 1984-85 school year but wrote, "Just a month ago I went to our PTA and asked for and received a commitment of \$500 - which I'll receive this Spring of '86." Table 7 shows statistical information concerning the ways school library media specialists solicit gifts.

Table 7
Methods of Soliciting Gifts

Method	No. reporting*	Percent reporting*
Wrote for specific free materials	25	42.37
Asked to be put on a mailing list to receive free materials	16	27.12
Discussed the budget in relation to unmet needs	11	18.64
Issued a "want list"	8	13.56
Asked individuals or groups to consider meeting specific needs	8	13.56
Other	10	16.95

* Multiple responses were possible. Percent is based on a total of 59 respondents.

It was hypothesized that 25 percent or more of the school library media specialists would solicit gifts by

issuing a "want list" or by making written requests for specific free materials. A total of 55.93 percent of the respondents indicated that they solicited gifts in these ways. This hypothesis was therefore accepted.

All sixty-five respondents, whether they had previously held the same position or not, were asked to indicate whether their materials selection policy contained a statement about gifts. Thirty-seven respondents (56.92 percent) indicated that theirs did. Twenty-five (38.46 percent) responded that theirs did not, and three (4.62 percent) wrote in "unknown," "don't know," or "? - too lazy to look." It was hypothesized that 50 percent or more would have a materials selection policy containing a statement about gifts, and this hypothesis was therefore accepted.

It should be noted that the questionnaire item did not necessarily request information about a written policy, but the comments noted above would indicate that some of the respondents felt that the item specifically referred to a written policy. Comments by other respondents suggested or stated that they were referring to an unwritten policy. "[Gifts are] accepted at the discretion of the media specialist," wrote one. "[This is an] unwritten policy of the school," wrote another.

When written, a materials selection policy containing a statement about gifts can be valuable whenever a public relations problem with a potential donor arises. None of the respondents mentioned that any such problems had

occurred. One school library media specialist did note that having a statement about gifts in the materials selection policy is "very important," perhaps indicating the respondent's awareness of potential public relations problems.

CHAPTER 5

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to collect and analyze data about the offering of gifts to school library media centers in Iowa. A questionnaire concerning the donation and solicitation of gifts was developed and mailed to 135 school library media specialists from four non-adjointing AEA's. Items on the questionnaire requested information about numbers and types of donations, their sources, their disposal, reasons for their exclusion from collections, their benefits, and whether a statement concerning gifts was included in the selection policy of the school library media center. The data collected from the sixty-five returned questionnaires indicated that few donations are being made to most school library media centers. Only one school library media center reported receiving large numbers of gifts. Gifts were most frequently offered by those closest to the daily operation of the school, particularly students, staff, and parents, although members of the community at large were frequently mentioned as the sources of smaller numbers of gifts. Donations of print and nonprint materials were by far the most frequent, and most of these were added

to the collections of the school library media centers to which they were offered. Those which were not added were most often outdated, inappropriate for the curriculum or the age group served, or were duplications of materials already in the collection.

The school library media specialists responding to the questionnaire indicated that supplementing the budget was the most important benefit of gifts. They also felt that gifts are valuable for increasing interest in the program of the school library media center and for their provision of useful materials, both current and out-of-print. About one-third indicated no ways in which they had solicited gifts during the 1984-85 school year; however, only a few stated that they did not solicit gifts. Requests for free materials were the most frequently reported means of soliciting gifts.

Finally, 56.92 percent of the respondents indicated that their materials selection policy included a statement concerning gifts. A single comment by one school library media specialist suggested personal awareness that public relations problems can accompany gifts. None of the respondents specifically mentioned any public relations problems which had occurred due to donations which were offered.

The following specific hypotheses were accepted for the reasons stated:

H₂: Fifty percent or more of the gifts offered to the

school library media centers were from parents of individual students and/or from parent/teacher organizations. A total of 70.91 percent of all reported gifts were received from these two sources.

H₃: Seventy-five percent or more of the gifts offered to the school library media centers were print and/or nonprint materials. An overwhelming 97.41 percent of the reported gifts were print or nonprint materials.

H₅: Ten percent or more of the excluded materials were inappropriate for curricular reasons and/or because of the age groups the school library media centers serve. A total of 14.75 percent of the excluded materials were rejected for these reasons.

H₆: Fifty percent or more of the school library media specialists state that gifts are beneficial because they provide materials that otherwise would be unaffordable. Budget supplementation was a benefit of gifts indicated by 79.66 percent of the respondents.

H₇: Twenty-five percent or more of the school library media specialists solicit gifts by issuing a "want list" and/or by making written requests for free materials. A total of 55.93 percent of the respondents indicated that they solicited gifts in these ways.

H₈: Fifty percent or more of the school library media centers have a selection policy which includes a statement concerning gifts. The selection policies of 56.92 percent of the school library media centers included this kind of statement.

Two hypotheses were rejected. The first stated that 75 percent or more of the school library media centers received fewer than five gifts last year. Although numbers of gifts were generally small and only one school library media center received large numbers of gifts, only 66.1 percent received fewer than five gifts. Responses to some items on the questionnaire showed differing total numbers of gifts; however, the median number of gifts received could only be two or three per year. Numbers of gifts were not as small as had been hypothesized but were not nearly as large as those reported for other types of libraries as discussed in the review of the literature.

The other hypothesis which was rejected stated that 50 percent or more of the print and nonprint materials offered to the school library media centers were excluded from the collections. A total of 81.21 percent of these gifts were added to the collections. It was hypothesized that a lower percentage of donations would be excluded from school library media centers than from the other types of libraries whose disposal of gifts was discussed in the literature. Parents and teachers, who were thought to be the most frequent donors to school library media centers, are groups who ought to be familiar with the purposes and needs of school library media centers. The data suggest that donors may be even more aware of the purposes and needs than was expected.

The one school library media specialist who reported

receiving large numbers of gifts discarded about 15 percent of those gifts, accounting for all except eleven of the total donations reported to have been discarded. The same respondent also indicated having used all of the methods of solicitation which were listed in the questionnaire except for asking for specific needs to be met. Although it is not advisable to draw conclusions on the basis of the responses of one school library media specialist, this set of responses suggests that when large numbers of gifts are received, many may be unwanted. The responses also suggest that school library media specialists planning to begin or increase gift solicitation may be wise to use the more direct methods of solicitation such as asking for specific materials to be given or for funds to be provided to purchase them. Asking for undesignated funds would be another means of solicitation which would enable retention of control over the materials obtained.

Respondents frequently indicated that better public relations resulted from gift solicitation. None of the many public relations problems addressed in the literature was mentioned by the respondents. Perhaps the relatively small size, homogeneous clientele, and easily understood functions of school library media centers are factors causing fewer public relations problems. Requesting specific materials or funds, besides reducing numbers of undesirable compared to desirable donations, should also aid in maintaining positive public relations.

The limited information in the literature concerning

gifts to school library media centers and the low rate of return of the questionnaire used in this study may reflect a general lack of knowledge about the potential of gifts for school library media centers. Relatively few school library media specialists may be actively soliciting gifts or planning to do so.

If this study were to be replicated, several changes would be recommended in an effort to increase response and to obtain more accurate data. The population could be informed of the study in advance and asked to record information concerning gifts throughout the year. Follow-up postcards could be sent to non-respondents. Because so many schools participate in the Campbells' Labels for Education Program, the questionnaire should explain whether to classify the items received through such programs as gifts and, if so, how to record them.

Fund-raising activities, such as book fairs, and the amount of time and labor donated by volunteers were not examined by this study but are means which school library media centers use in an effort to compensate for limited staff time and budgets. Studies utilizing a similar population and examining these topics would be useful. Other interesting investigations would be studies examining possible correlations between gift solicitation and particular characteristics of school library media centers, such as annual budget allocation, personnel, size of collection, number of students served, or grade level of the

students served. The length of time that school library media specialists have served in the same position and the public relations methods they employ are other variables which might be investigated because these factors could influence how well the needs of the collection are understood and represented, thus influencing the number and quality of donations.

APPENDIX A

4335 Logan Avenue
Waterloo, Iowa 50703
November 1, 1985

Colleagues,

I need your help to complete a study I am conducting to partially fulfill the requirements for the Master of Arts degree in library science. The major aim of my study is to collect and analyze data concerning the donation of gifts to school library media centers in Iowa during the 1984-85 school year. I realize that taking the time to answer a survey is a sacrifice. However, it is the only way to determine what is really happening "out there."

Your individual responses will remain anonymous. You may, however, request a copy of the results of this study.

Please give thoughtful answers to the items of the questionnaire that follows. I would appreciate receiving your response by November 15th.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Sharon Stiles

Sharon Stiles

Gifts to School Library Media Centers

Questionnaire

In answering these questions, please consider gifts to be furnishings, equipment, print or nonprint materials, or funds (other than the regular school library media center budget or restricted federal funds) which are offered from any source with the understanding that no compensation will be given. Include information on both solicited and unsolicited gifts. When gifts are print or nonprint materials, a multivolume work with a collective title should be considered to be one gift (an encyclopedia set such as The World Book, for example), but each volume of a multivolume work should be considered to be a separate gift when the volumes have individual titles and each is processed as an individual item. (Childcraft and The Chronicles of Narnia are often handled in this way.) Materials transferred from another area of the school or from another school library media center should be considered to be gifts only if it is known that they were not originally purchased using budgeted funds of the school district. Time given by volunteers should not be considered to be a gift, but products made by volunteers should be considered to be gifts if the school did not purchase the materials used to make them.

1. During the 1984-85 school year did you hold your present school assignment?

_____ yes

_____ no (If this is your response, do not answer items 2-8.)

2. In how many instances during the 1984-85 school year were gifts offered to your school library media center? (If you serve more than one center, please answer all questions for only one of them.)

_____ none (If this is your response, do not answer items 3-6.)

_____ 1-4

_____ 5-8

_____ 8-12

_____ more than 12

(over)

Questionnaire

Page 2

For items 3-8, multiple responses may be necessary. All questions refer to the 1984-85 school year.

3. Indicate the number of times that gifts were offered to your school library media center from these sources.

_____ present or former students

_____ present or former staff members

_____ parents individually

_____ parent/teacher organizations

_____ members of the community at large

_____ other school library media centers or other types of libraries

_____ businesses

_____ government agencies

_____ religious groups

_____ other non-profit agencies not already mentioned

4. Indicate the number of times each of these types of gifts was offered to your school library media center.

_____ furnishings

_____ equipment

_____ print or nonprint materials

_____ funds designated for specific purposes

_____ undesignated funds

5. Indicate the number of times that gifts of print or non-print materials were handled in these ways. (Do not answer items 5 or 6 if no gifts of materials were offered.)

_____ added to the collection

_____ returned to the donor

5. Cont.

_____ exchanged for something else
_____ sold _____ given away _____ discarded
_____ stored for possible future use

6. In any instances when gifts of print or nonprint materials were not added to the collection, indicate the number of times these were your reasons not to include the gifts.

_____ duplication of present library holdings
_____ outdated _____ poor physical condition
_____ unacceptable format
_____ lack of staff time for handling
_____ processing more costly than the gift's value
_____ required special storage or handling
_____ giver placed conditions on acceptance
_____ inaccurate, biased, or of poor literary quality
_____ inappropriate for curriculum or age group

7. Check any of the following ways in which you feel that gifts benefit school library media centers.

_____ supplement the budget
_____ provide useful current materials
_____ provide useful out-of-print materials
_____ stimulate interest in the program of the school library media center
_____ other (Please explain.) _____

Questionnaire

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8. Check any of the following ways in which you formally or informally solicited gifts.

discussed the budget in relation to unmet needs

asked to be put on a mailing list to receive free materials

wrote for specific free materials

issued a "want list"

asked individuals or groups to consider meeting specific needs

other (Please describe.) _____

9. Does your materials selection policy contain a statement about gifts?

yes

no

APPENDIX B

Table 8
Rate of Response

Mailing	No. of questionnaires mailed	No. responding	Percent responding
Pre-test mailing	27	13	48.15
Second mailing	108	52	48.15
Total	135	65	48.15

Table 9

Number and Percent of Response by Area Education Agency

	No. of questionnaires		Percent of response	
	Sent	Returned	In AEA	Total
AEA 5	28	12	42.86	18.46
AEA 7	58	38	65.52	58.46
AEA 13	26	7	26.92	10.77
AEA 15	23	8	34.78	12.31
Total	135	65		100.00

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